



THE STRESS TIMEBOMB - PART 1



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:

14CB-NSCN-41X



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Warm-up

What do you think are the causes and effects of stress at work? Look at the phrases below and put 'C' (cause) or 'E' (effect) next to each.

1. low staff morale
2. cost cutting
3. employee absences
4. a heavy workload
5. dissatisfied customers
6. lower profits
7. poor performances
8. bullying at work
9. the economy

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Key words

Match the following words with their correct definition:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. significant | a. clear, easy to see, e.g. a
_____ difference |
| 2. noticeable | b. extremely important |
| 3. essential | c. important or great, e.g. a
_____ increase |
| 4. consequences | d. the results or effects of something |





3

Find the information

You are going to read an article about a survey of British companies on the theme of stress in the workplace. Complete the following statements with information from the text.

1. 500 managers took part in the survey.
2. According to _____ managers, stress had affected business over the past year.
3. According to _____ managers, stress was continuing to have a negative effect on business.
4. _____ of businesses said that the number of employee absences had risen over the past year.
5. _____ of businesses said that staff morale had decreased over the past year.

THE
INDEPENDENT

The stress timebomb

It's time to improve business relationships.

1. Is your workforce too stressed to perform at its best, or even to make it into the office every day? If so, you're not alone – new research suggests that employee stress is a serious problem in small and medium-sized businesses.
2. 500 decision-makers at British companies took part in a survey by Zurich Insurance. 42 percent – 210 managers – said that employee stress had affected business over the past year. One in three said that stress-related issues such as low staff morale and increased employee absences were continuing to have a negative effect on the overall performance of their business.
3. A fifth of the businesses said the number of their stress-related employee absences had risen over the past two years and 25 percent said staff morale had decreased because of more stress at work.
4. "These figures show that dealing with workforce challenges and risks is an essential part of achieving better performance and greater growth for small businesses," says Richard Coleman, a director at Zurich Insurance. "It is perhaps not surprising that the current business climate has had such an impact on workforce stress and morale. But if these issues aren't solved, they could have serious long-term consequences."
5. But how do employers deal with stress? This challenge is even more difficult in the current economic environment – because of low growth, many small businesses are afraid of their future. Therefore, they feel they need to try to improve their profit margins through cost cutting – which is exactly the sort of thing that can cause stress among staff.

Monday, 11 March 2013 by David Prosser

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Checking understanding

Answer the questions below.

1. According to the new research, how serious is the problem of stress for small and medium-sized businesses?
2. According to Richard Coleman, what is essential to achieving better growth for small businesses?
3. What is responsible for workforce stress and morale?
4. Why is it difficult to deal with stress in the current economic climate?





5 Talking point

Do you think stress is a serious problem?

6 Grammar - Reported speech

There are two ways of telling somebody what another person said – **direct speech** and **reported speech**. Study the table below:

Direct speech	Reported speech
<p>Direct speech repeats the exact words that somebody said:</p> <p>Peter said, "I'm at home."</p> <p>The politician said, "I will create many new jobs."</p> <p>Alison said, "I went out on Saturday."</p> <p>Omar said, "I've never been to China."</p> <p>Daniel said, "I can't speak French."</p> <p>Pavel said, "I want to go to the concert."</p>	<p>Reported speech <i>reports</i> what somebody said without repeating the exact words:</p> <p>Peter said that he was at home.</p> <p>The politician said that he would create many new jobs.</p> <p>Alison said that she went out on Saturday.</p> <p>Alison said that she had gone out on Saturday.</p> <p>Omar said that he had never been to China.</p> <p>Daniel said that he couldn't speak French.</p> <p>Pavel said that he wanted to go to the concert.</p>

Complete the rules for forming reported speech:

- The tense of the verb in **direct speech** changes in **reported speech**.
am/is/are → **was/were** simple present → _____ present perfect (have/has + past participle) → _____ will → _____ can → _____
- The simple past in **direct speech** (*went*) can stay the same in reported speech, or we can use the _____ (*had gone*).
- If the situation has not changed, it is not necessary to change the tense.
Peter said that he **was** at home. (*Maybe he is still at home now. Maybe he isn't.*)
Peter said he **is** at home. (*He is still at home now.*)

Now look at the following statements from the article. Write 'D' (Direct speech) or 'R' (Reported speech) next to each statement.

- 210 managers said that employee stress had affected business over the past year.
- One in three managers said that stress-related issues were continuing to have a negative effect on the overall performance of their businesses.
- It is perhaps not surprising that the current business climate has had such an impact on workforce stress and morale.
- These figures show that dealing with workforce challenges and risks is an essential part of achieving better performance.





Answer the following questions:

1. What tenses are used in the reported statements above?
2. Write what the managers said in direct speech:

210 managers said, "Employee stress "

One in three managers said, "Stress-related issues "

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Practice

Daniel Goldman has just found a new supplier. During a rather 'stressful' negotiation, it turns out that the supplier isn't completely honest. Look at what she told him the week before and complete their conversation below. Change the tenses appropriately.

"Most of our customers order less than 2,000 units."

"Our price is 50 dollars per unit."

"The minimum order is 800 units."

"We aren't planning to build a new plant."

"We can offer a \$20 discount for large orders."

"We haven't moved location yet."

"We will deliver within 30 days."

Nicole: Our price is 60 dollars per unit.

Daniel: But I thought you said your price was 50 dollars per unit . (1)

Nicole: No, I think you misunderstood. It's 50 dollars if you order the minimum order, which is 1,000 units. If you just want 800 units, the price is 60 dollars.

Daniel: But I thought you told us (2)

Nicole: No, it's always been 1,000 units.

Daniel: What about delivery? Is 20 days still possible?

Nicole: Actually, I said (3)
And you can expect some delay at the border.

Daniel: Delay? But your factory is located in the European Union. There shouldn't be any delays.

Nicole: Our new factory is located outside the EU.

Daniel: But you said (4)

Nicole: No, I think you misunderstood.

Daniel: So, what if we order 2000 units? Do we get a \$20 discount?

Nicole: No, we can't offer that kind of discount for 2000 units.

Daniel: But you said (5)

Nicole: Sorry, a 'large order' means over 3,000 units.

Daniel: But you told me (6)
Surely, 2,000 is a large order.

Nicole: Actually, we have many customers who order more than 4,000. That's why we are building a new factory.

Daniel: But didn't you say ? (7)

